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NOTES AND COMMENT

PACIFIC COAST MEETING FOR 1921

The 1921 Pacific Coast Meeting of the Ecological Society will be held in affiliation with the Pacific Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at the University of California, Berkeley, California, on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, August 4 to 6, inclusive. The meetings of the Ecological Society will be held jointly with the Western Society of Naturalists, as in former years. Members who will be able to present papers should send title, abstract, and facilities required for presentation to the Secretary before July 1.

CONFERENCE ON RESOURCES OF INTERIOR WATERS.

Secretary Hoover, of the Department of Commerce, invites investigators, administrative officers, and all other interested persons to meet at the Fisheries Biological Station, Fairport, Iowa, upon a date in June to be announced later, for conference regarding the conservation of resources of interior waters, and the ways and means of applying science more effectively to their preservation and increase. Through the Commissioner of Fisheries he has requested the following persons to act immediately as a committee on organization and plans: Dr. R. E. Coker, Dr. V. E. Shelford, Mr. J. E. Krouse, Dr. A. S. Pearse, Dr. F. A. Stromston and Mr. R. L. Barney. As soon as the report of the committee is received and considered a more definite announcement will be made.

COMMITTEE ON THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL CONDITIONS.

The plan of work, and names of the three joint chairmen recently added to the committee, were published in Science for March 18, 1921. We beg to remind our readers that persons having knowledge of areas suitable for preservation are requested to communicate with Dr. Shelford at once since the list of areas is soon to be completed.

CAUSES OF FOREST ENCROACHMENT UPON GRASSLAND

In the article in this issue on "Some Changes in the Vegetation of Western Kentucky" a particularly interesting case of the encroachment of forests upon grassland is mentioned. A large area which was treeless when the region was first settled is now covered with forest, predominantly black oak, except where cultivated. The author of the above mentioned article attributes the origin of these treeless areas, or so-called "barrens," to fire; since the custom of burning ceased the trees have come in. Later on, in speaking of an undergrowth of cane, which used to be abundant in certain sections but has since almost wholly vanished, he shows that grazing of both cattle and hogs has been widespread and is probably responsible directly or indirectly for the rapid disappearance of the cane. Is it not possible that grazing may be also one of the causes, and an important one, in the forestation of the former treeless areas? Grazing animals, particularly hogs, would cut up the grass sod which had previously interfered with the establishment of oak seedlings, and would trample acorns into the mineral soil, thus favoring germination of tree seed and the encroachment of the forest on the grassland.

Suggestions for Cooperative Study of Some Features of Climate and Plant Growth

A number of years ago (in 1905) the writer began keeping a record of the appearance of the first flowers of various plants, chiefly native and naturalized species. This practice has been continued every year, recording as many species as possible, usually from 100 to 300. The study, begun as a matter of current interest, soon developed the idea of determining the average date for each species, and after several years, data had accumulated which seemed worth placing upon record. The results of five years' observations in northeastern Kansas have been published (Am. Mid. Nat., Vol. 5), and those of eleven years in North Dakota are being prepared for similar publication.

The nature of the data at once suggested a comparison of the two localities which lie in the same longitude and formation, separated by seven degrees of latitude. The possibility of determining the heat requirement became a question for further investigation. A preliminary study of this last point has been made by computing the sums of daily mean temperature in excess of 40° F. for the second locality. These results show a considerable variation for the same plants in different seasons, with corresponding variations for different species. By this method the soft maple shows at Fargo a variation of from 2° (1915) to 124° (1911); the white elm 50° to 132° for the same years.

Such a compilation and various observations emphasize strongly the necessity of standardized data as well as proper methods of computation. The data referred to are likely to be unreliable for careful study on account of observational errors such as: frequency and extent of field trips, variation in individual plants, exposure, moisture, etc. A comparison of the annual lists frequently shows an absence of some common plant. Evidently it would be desirable to prepare a short list of species which flowers at different times and endeavor to secure for each of these the data for each year.